

# REWRITE



## The Magazine of Effective Writing

Vol. IX No. 8.

AUGUST, 1949.

Twenty-five cents

### THINGS YOU OUGHT TO KNOW

Professional writing is serious business, even if you practice it on a small time and occasional basis. Even one sale to an editor who pays only a few dollars "on publication" may often represent the bringing to a sharp peak, of amazing arrays of writing and selling "know how". First, you have got obviously, to know that the market exists, and then what the editor wants, and finally how to present it. It could easily be that your amalgam of practical experience fitting you for that particular job dates back a decade or more. Fortunate is the writer whose native imagination can wrestle two and two together from odd snippets of previous experience and make them add up to four or multiply to sixteen or thirty-two or sixty-four.

Practical experience is the writer's chief stock-in-trade. Yet it is often intangible, and much of it may have little or nothing to do with actual writing and selling. A knowledge of human nature and curious anecdotes and stray wisps of information that suddenly and quite unexpectedly become important, to "document" a piece you might think should and could never be written by you, form the very heart of it. And all of this necessarily accumulates gradually and mysteriously. Perhaps when you are "off duty" & playing.

Therefore, we are making a beginning this month in this article at telling you some of the things you ought to know, if you are to get the most fun and profit out of writing. I have already said that any kind of authorship is serious business. That bears eternal repetition, however. It is also the hardest kind of work. *Mary Roberts Rinehart* did a book under that title once, and it's still true, as *Somerset Maugham* attests, I'm told, in his notebooks that recently began running in *COSMOPOLITAN*. It is hard work, but for a real writer, just as for a real mother, creation is worthwhile. (The only thing is that human damn foolishness sometimes make it—a lot more difficult than would be otherwise, and normally necessary.)

The inexperienced writer should also note very quickly that writing is not well paid. It is a way of life, the rich and successful authors to the contrary. The deeper you become involved, the more you will discover a truism, that money is only incidental,—although vitally important. It makes it possible for you to undertake many of the tasks that seem to be worthwhile. And every writer, like every mother, (which is not a sentimental analogy), has to be in a sense both ruthless and selfish. Some projects and the difficult circumstances under which certain writers write, require that the law of survival be invoked pretty unceremoniously. At such times a writer needs very "understanding" relatives, friends or neighbors. However, it should be quickly added, that personal egotism is not what is meant by ruth-

lessness. The writer who does not remain impersonal, and who fails to nurture compassion in his heart, will soon perish of sterility, or, worse, end up writing the kind of temporary fiction that flatters or astounds those adult juveniles, who seek only the flashiest of escape entertainment. Invariably, this is here today and gone tomorrow. Without question, some of the dreariest and hardest reading is yesterday's bestsellers.

But this is perhaps the most important of all things that a writer ought to know. The writer who hopes to last beyond his own generation must have character, real character that rises above the petty jealousies, politics and bickerings of a highly competitive business. Many pseudo-literary folk who like to think of themselves as professionals, enjoy scoffing at the would-be writers and all the camp-followers and hangers-on, who seek hungrily to mug their way into the picture. But nowhere except in the amusement world—which too often is a vacuum sealed off from the rich salty breezes of life—will you find so many insincere back-patters, with a knife under their cloak, waiting to stab you. You are fortunate, indeed, if they are only empty-headed or silly sentimentalists at heart. It takes tremendous character merely to exist in this unreal play world. It takes even more to hold an accurate mirror up to the life you seek to portray or comment upon, & also to retain both your perspective and humor.

A writer needs to learn that jobs actually perpetuated on paper, and the comments of persons who have no axe to grind are the only votes that count. Therefore, you have to go quietly about your business. You must be alive, live eagerly and trustfully from day to day, yet have a guiding program, an all-pervading faith and philosophy that prevents you from being the victim of every idle wind that chances to whip your sails. Yet it's equally essential to be adaptable, to adjust yourself to new situations, new requirements of the editors for whom you work. You begin to write a piece that interests you and then an editor asks you to do another in an absolutely different field. Of course you do it.

A writer needs to learn that writing is a long, slow job. Many of the big name authors were newspapermen and obscure fiction writers before they crashed through to big successes. Many of them had been writing for 5 years or more before they rose from a pulp, let us say, to a slick. Some of them revised a single story half-a-dozen times before an editor would accept it. Others have been fortunate to have editors practically write the story for them in showing them how a big climax should be dramatized. And still others have pestered an editor for year in order to win their first big acceptance. All of them have stories they have never handed around....These are just a few of the things the coming writer ought to know.

## REWRITE

Published Monthly by  
Writers' Counsel Service, 44 Langdon Street,  
Cambridge, 38, Mass.

<u>LOVE YOUR</u>	<u>William E. Harris,</u>	<u>PEACE</u>
<u>AMERICA</u>	<u>Elva Ray Harris,</u>	<u>DEPENDS</u>
<u>ENOUGH!</u>	<u>Editors.</u>	<u>ON YOU!</u>

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: 25c. per copy, \$2.00 a year in advance anywhere in the world. Copy-right, August, 1949. Reproduction without a credit to and permission from the editors, is strictly forbidden.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS—we cannot be responsible for changes not received in this office ONE MONTH in advance of taking effect. When possible, please give exact date of change. PROMPT RENEWALS help us to serve you better.

### WE CAN EARN THE GOOD LIFE IF WE DESIRE IT

Sen. Henry Cabot Lodge recently suggested that the Government pay the expenses of the presidential candidates and that campaign expenses thus be limited. Whether this idea is practical or not, and whether it should apply only to major or all elected offices is academic. The basic truth is that the great game of politics is a wasteful, a viciously cruel joke on the American people. It ruins their lives and undermines their character. And the worst of it is that it requires more and more suckers to swell the vote getting, and pay-off by which politicians live. For when you start promising "vote for me and I will"—, competition makes the promises grow progressively by leaps and bounds.

If you think I am exaggerating, just measure your tax-bill against the vacation that you are now enjoying, or could not afford to take. Against the education you are not going to be able to give your children, or any of the other necessities of average, decent living (not the luxuries!) that we American people want ourselves and our children to enjoy. If you live in an apartment or earn only a small income, and thus think you don't pay taxes, just measure the decreased value of a dollar today as against the one used by the parents or grandparents of today's people.

The folk of other nations look with envious admiration and also contempt at us, who have so much, yet guard our heritage with a care bordering on recklessness. We tend to laugh at taxes and governmental waste, as a necessary evil. But year by year the tide is slowly rising. The percentage of our annual income spent on Government (of all types, & conditions) is mysteriously increasing. The noose around our necks and liberties is ever and irresistibly tightening. Some day, we've either got to muster our strength, and cast it off, or be strangled "until dead" by it. This is no laughing matter. The best economists recognize the truth of it.

Don't misunderstand. Not all government is automatically evil. We could not have fought for and won our Independence without a unified central government, no matter how sketchy and tenuous. Many of the great monuments to our civilization: huge dams, reclamation projects, battles for better sanitary & health conditions, are government inspired. Government can be the physical manifestation of a courageous and resourceful people determined to achieve a way of life which they deem more satisfactory than any previously lived by previous generations.

But in any great organization there is always a tendency to waste and decadence. The people constantly have to reassess the viability of their dream, and to see that they think clearly through the confusing details of their problems. So it is today with America. And America is only all of us, working together in harmony and unison to create the kind of world we wish to live in. We won't achieve it by wasting millions, or spending billions to stage bigger and better wars.

Government on all levels from the smallest hamlet to the great and powerful nation, of which we are proud, is necessary. But we've been much too free with our use of it. Even the dollars of the richest man on earth, are stretchable only so far. When we throw them down the drain, for politicians to waste in useless civic or national projects, when we allow them to be spent to make jobs for men and women too lazy to work; or to let politicians arrange their "out" on the side for doing the work they are paid salaries to do; or to pay off those who plan expensive campaign spectacles, we are merely being suckers and defrauding ourselves and our youngsters of their birthright. In no age has living ever been easy. Today, it requires good judgment and imagination. We can have Freedom and a higher standard of living than ever before. But we must earn it the hard way.

### TO HELP YOU BE BETTER WRITERS

Our editorials are a matter of surprise to some of our readers. The overwhelming majority of the letters we receive about them is extraordinarily favorable. One recent letter brings out the point we are driving for. "How," writes our correspondent, "could any thinking person fail to see the logic of WE CAN HAVE FREEDOM IF WE PAY FOR IT? But how many people really think for themselves? In one way or another we are told how and what to think, what to wear and what dentrifice, what type amusement to use, and a lot more. It is all too easy to become slaves to "clever" advertising and smooth editorials. Editorials inspired not by sincere beliefs, but by the demands of political owners and high paying advertisers." (That is the danger which we pointed to in our story on another page, about the correspondents who died in India.)

A writer who thinks for himself isn't always right. But he's worth listening to.

## REWRITE

### FUNDAMENTALS OF GOOD POETRY

By Elva Ray Harris

#### THE MONITOR AS A MARKET

The numerical chances of getting published are, of course, a great deal better in a daily newspaper than in a monthly magazine. The *Christian Science Monitor*, 1 Norway St., Boston, Mass., offers a varied market to poets. It uses more verse than many newspapers and pays better.

The biggest share of the poetry is used on the Home Forum Page, which daily prints 2 or 3 poems. Below are representative examples. Notice how most of the poems present a brief image. In "Night Piece" the imagery is that of sound, while the others are concerned mainly with sight images.

#### Night Piece

Far through the night  
The wood-owl lonely  
Hollows his plaint,  
To be answered only

By the old wind's  
Amphoric sigh,  
Threading the air  
In prolonged reply.

The forest stirs  
As it were haunted  
By presences fey  
And dark-enchanted.

While over and over,  
Remote and eerie,  
The owl repeats  
His somber query.

DOLores CAIRNS

#### Winged Pollen

In the quick wind  
the acacia blossoms scatter,  
swirling on the bright air  
like a swarm of yellow bees—  
On the quickened air:  
fragrance of honey?

GERTRUDE MAY LOVE

In "Mass Action" it is plain to be seen, that our good friend, Winthrop Pitt Tryon, a former music critic for the *Monitor*, is experimenting with sound effects to help him to put over his fine ideas.

There are other sections in addition to, and separate from, the Home Forum Page that print verse occasionally. "Saga of the Soil" was clipped from the Daily Features Page. A motto used on this page each day is: "Facts and Fun For All the Family." Now while this sample we have selected runs to 16 lines, I would caution that the make-up emphasizes a fairly tight brevity. There are a number of other features, including a daily anecdote, for which the *Monitor* pays quite generously. So you should study several issues.

#### Silhouette

(Tanka)

My three white birch trees  
In the dark and moonless night  
Are etched on my mind  
Like a quaint Japanese print  
Of silver on ebony.

GEORGE-ANNA HARRISON-CARTER

#### Mass Action

People!  
Don't be a mob  
To go out and rob;  
Nor, as sheep will,  
Hustle  
To the whistle  
Of a herder  
Going in for murder.

Instead, be many million  
Men, women, and children,  
A multiple individual,  
The sum of you all;  
Prospering the vogue  
Of the Decalogue.

W. P. T.

#### Counterpoint

(Hokku)

Gold-green humming-bird  
Through green and gold of bamboo  
In morning sunlight,

H. J. L.

This particular verse was illustrated by a 2-column cartoon across the top.

It is a common idea. Even the idea of the little drama is not too original. It is another example, you see, of the clever rewriting of a familiar.

"An Outing" is from a Tuesday and Friday, not daily, feature, "For Children". The author is an English writer of long experience. Bill interviewed her years ago. "My Bread" was printed in the section of this feature—known as "Jack Horner's Party". Note the author's age.

#### My Bread

I eat my bread  
And chew the crust  
Because my Mother  
Says I must.  
Tommy Atkinson, 7  
of South Meriden, Conn.

ROSE STEINMAN

I clipped "Spring Song" from another feature, "For Young People", which appears every Monday, Wednesday & Thursday in place of "For Children". This is a representative example, since the poems we examined were aimed at youngish "young people". One of our *WCS Minute Men* discussed the two sections personally with Miss Kamm, Children's & Young Folks' editor, in the absence of Miss Ince, who was on vacation. This *Minute Men* gained the impression that the particular department just now is piled high with mss. Yet it is one which should be kept in mind. It is not overstocked all of the time.

### Saga of the Soil

#### PROLOGUE

Get out the rake, get out the hoe:  
Vegetables, vegetables, row on row,  
Premium peas, colossal corn—  
We'll stuff ourselves from night to morn.

#### Act I

Gardening's such simple fun:  
Plant the seeds, turn on the sun;  
Water slightly, weed a bit;  
Anticipate—but mostly sit.

(Plant those seeds a little thinner  
Or we'll need guests at every dinner.)

#### Act II

Sharpen up the paring knife:  
The first green shoot has come to life!

#### Act III

Weeds, weeds, weeds—they call for pluck.  
All this jungle larks: Frank Buck.

#### Epilogue

Lovely vegetables—have some more!  
We bought them at the corner store.

BALTY LUTERSEN

#### An Outing

When Mummy and I went into town  
The people hurried up and down,  
The buses all went rushing by,  
The houses were so very high  
That I could hardly see the sky.

When Mummy and I came home again  
We saw a bunny in the lane,  
A rose had opened on my tree,  
Dash came jumping up at me  
And we had ham and eggs for tea.

#### Spring Song

This is the time of lilacs,  
And forty thousand birds  
Are flitting through the bushes  
And filling them with words.

The words are set to music,  
The music's strain is clear.  
But the words are in bird language—  
And I don't know what I hear.

Then all at once I know the birds  
Just say these words and sing:  
"Take off your winter overshoes,  
And celebrate the spring!"

TOM ROBINSON

## REWRITE

I found the poem "Invitation to Camping" right in among the camping ads. So you can see how the editor's mind works in making up a page

### Invitation to Camping

*Written for The Christian Science Monitor*  
Come, build a campfire with me  
And learn to blaze a woodland trail:  
Come, share the breadth of all outdoors.  
A bounty that can never fail.

Come, canter down a bridle path  
Or walk where shore and ocean meet:  
Listen for call of distant bird  
Or weave a basket, gay, complete.

Come, learn to work and play together  
With happy friends from near and far:  
Wake with the sun above your pillow,  
Sleep beneath moon and shining star.

LOUISE BARRY

The Women's Page, also, is an excellent possibility, if you furnish its sympathetic editor, Miss Arndt, with just the right kind of cheerful, helpful bit of short verse. She is not dependent upon verse for filler, so she only takes what she really likes.

And don't forget the Saturday Magazine, a special supplement. "Iris" was clipped from it.

Keep in mind the tenets of the Christian Science Church. The MONITOR isn't a religious magazine or a propaganda sheet. But naturally it won't print any material that in the editors' opinions is contradictory to the Church and its teachings, or would be offensive to those who believe in its doctrines and the good life, as the editors and the reader circulation visualize these. The MONITOR in many ways is conservative; it is also militant against a number of contemporary evils such as drunken driving.

### Iris

In shell of tissue  
Iris waits,  
Unmoved by promised  
Floral dates.

An inner smiling  
Shapes in heart,  
Until with joy, it  
Breaks apart.

ANNEKE VAN ZINDRAN

I found only one poem used at a time in all the various features mentioned, except on the Home Forum Page. When you do the arithmetic the answer is about 28 poems used weekly by this market. This high number increases the chances for you. And, of course, the publicity is good. For this is one of the few international newspapers read regularly by an increasingly large number of Americans.

## BOOK FOR WRITERS

WORD BANK. By Sophie Basescu. Rodale Press. \$3.00. The general idea of defining a word, and then setting a different word in "bold-face" print on the right hand margin at the end of each separate definition, so as to give a number of overtone shadings, is ingenious and time saving. But some of the words that have been selected, seem arbitrarily chosen and certainly a number of the expressions & the phrases appear stiff, artificial or even erroneous in the usages suggested.

News note. James Lane Doyle has resigned, we are sorry to learn, as editor & vice-president of Poets' Haven, the organization for self-help among the shut-ins. Jack Gormley, the poet, replaces him. He will be missed.

## SOME NOTES ON EFFICIENT SELLING

A poet wrote us the other day that she got brave and sent out poems to a whole string of big and varied types of magazines. We think that really is an excellent idea. There is a kind of wild shooting based on sentimentalized hope. That's a waste of postage. But the writer who shoots at his regular markets, & also speculates wisely, is the one who will eventually climb the ladder. He learns each time he sends stuff out intelligently on an honest gamble.

He tests his rising curve of ability, and discovers whether he is yet up to the level of the bigger and better magazines. He does practically the same thing as the sailor who drops the lead and sounds. He can compare a set of figures he thus arrives at with those on his charts. Result: he knows approximately where he stands. He is able to see what's behind the deep pea-soup fog he travels in.

And here's a technique that millions upon millions of would-be writers have tried repeatedly to short-cut, but which professional writers follow relentlessly. First, they study one or both of the writers' handbooks on markets. They also watch the magazines—all of them!—eagle-eyed for market tips. It is a good idea to annotate your list and use the magazines for last minute changes. (The reason for reading several writers' periodicals is that you can check one market note against another. Some of the magazines (not REWRITE very often!) have a record for careless editing.)

When you have found a market that appears a likely one, always study sample copies!

TODAY'S WOMAN, 67 West 44th St., NYC 18.. Recently wrote a poet friend of ours: "This magazine is directed to the young married women whose average age is 28 years. Her children range from 2-7 years. We feel that she is more interested in short, light, humorous verse." (That is what is known as Slanting!)

Iowa State College has started a series of studies for outdoor journalism, in which the potential outdoor columnist will receive "a basic training in fish and wildlife conservation, zoology, entomology, forest & range management, soil conservation and technical journalism," says CONSERVATION NEWS, Carl D. Shoemaker, Natl. Wildlife Federation, Wash., D.C. This is a useful item for two reasons.. (1) it suggests a column that small newspapers will sometimes take from the unknown or inexperienced writer; (2) the subjects mentioned are growing steadily in news-value.

Poetry Round Robin, Miss Carrie Esther Hamill, R.D. #4, Box 182-A, Irwin, Pa., & Mrs. Vietta Wines, another WCS Family member, are now starting a robin for working poets. They want about 8 in the group, who sell and who will help each other. No "just letter writers" allowed. Good idea. Write in for dope.



## REWRITE

### (EXCLUSIVE)

#### A CHANCE FOR TELEVISION WRITERS

Through one of our long time subscribers, we're privileged to publish the exclusive tip that one of the promising younger Hollywood producers is looking for material for Television shorts (half-hour dramatic material). This tip is not for everyone. The men about whom we are talking has done fine work, some pictures that were well thought of; and for the Government during World War II a number of documentaries that increased his reputation. He cannot therefore, be bothered with obviously amateur stuff. He prefers writers who have published, and are, like himself, on the way up. An unquestioned copyright would simplify matters considerably. Since he himself is an independent and so gambling time and energy, pay though definite, would be a nominal return. And of course costs of production must be kept low. But the opportunity is a bona fide one. The chance for professional and artistic advancement unusually good.

We would like to give full details, but it will serve writers better if we don't. So, if you have any published stories, write to Bill Harris and clear them through him.

#### A NOTE TO COOL YOU OFF

It is just about last call for Christmas! Get your ideas in the mail quick! It is also a good time to begin planning your "stories" with a summer angle for 1950.

#### WE RECEIVED A NEWS RELEASE

Both the editors of REWRITE were shocked, indeed, to receive a mysterious news release using the names of CHURCH WORLD SERVICE and CARE, but not released by either of these organizations. It urged all persons to join a campaign to buy a commercial soap they might not need, in order to obtain bonus bars for the unwashed needy of Europe. REWRITE sympathizes with the innocent victims of imperialistic aggression wholeheartedly, but also recognizes such high pressure advertising booby-traps as morally indefensible.

Let us not forget, or fail to teach generations yet to come, that the heartrending interest of business companies in the victims of various shortages is motivated purely by a selfish desire to sell more goods in America at inflated prices. Business tycoons prefer to give part of their product away instead of voluntarily and patriotically facing up to a buyers' market. Let us not forget, nor fail to teach our children that charity extended in that spirit is as immoral as the conduct of any big business baron, who makes millions by first cutting his price so as to kill off his competitors, then giving his money to some educational institution in exchange for an honorary degree. No matter how deserving the need, God has little use for that kind of

"good works". True giving comes from the heart.

One reason we mention this distasteful subject in REWRITE is that such incapacity for straight thinking can often serve as a theme for observant and thoughtful writers. In a cynical fashion Somerset Maugham has exposed the shoddy morals of his fellow men just as Bernard Shaw has ridiculed them with his biting satirical tongue. Which reminds me of an anecdote about our good friend, Jim Connolly, the great sea story writer. When he visited Colby College not long ago for the acceptance of a complete collection of "first editions" of his books, they showed him the chapel given by and named for George Horace Lorimer, the famous editor of the SAT. EVE. POST. Jim took it in at a glance. "Humph," he remarked, "He thought he was God."

#### CASH PRIZES FOR POETS

The ANONYME WORKSHOP, 1254 Meston, 32 Edgewood Ave., Mill Valley, Cal., has sent us a very neatly typed mimeo bulletin concerning its Spring Session contests for poets. The prize winners in June are published and the necessary notes regarding activities. Only fee is an entrance fee, which covers all of the poems a writer may wish to submit. This fee represents the large sum of 25c. monthly. The two winning poems in June each paid off \$15, the prizes being given by persons, who wish to remain anonymous.

Those wishing details of the Fall Session should address as above an inquiry, with return self-addressed postal card enclosed.

DAILY MEDITATION, Wm. P. Taylor, Box 2710, (note change) San Antonio 1, Texas, (a correction of the advice given us and published last month). Said to be a good market.

#### A REWRITE REPORT TO WRITERS

On the back cover of the July issue, FIRST STORIES, which prints short shorts by "new" authors, carries this note:

"We will mail 50 copies of each issue to editors throughout the U.S. and Canada... thereby giving you the opportunity of having your story purchased by a leading national magazine. FIRST STORIES carries no copyright; therefore, any story printed in this magazine is available for sale to any other publication, motion picture studio, or radio broadcasting company."

May we point out that no "leading national magazine" would (1) publish any story already published elsewhere; (2) particularly an uncopyrighted story that might turn up in some other (third) publication before it appeared in the leading magazine. Least of all would any movie studio or radio station even think of touching such dangerous and also slight material. And 50 copies would not scratch the surface of the "leading national" magazines! Many editors would be left out

## REWRITE

### A MYSTERY NOVEL CONTEST

Rinehart & Co., 232 Madison Ave., NYC 16, announce the 4th Mary Roberts Rinehart Mystery Novel Prize Contest. Opened Aug. 1, and closes January 15, 1950. Award is \$2,000, of which one-half is an advance against royalties. There is an "escape" clause, providing for withholding of the award if no suitable ms. is turned up. Mrs. Rinehart, who is one of the judges, desires that the contest help to prove that a good mystery can quite incidentally be a good novel.

### THE FTC PROVIDES A PATTERN

The Federal Trade Commission has accepted a stipulation from Universal Fingerprint Systems, Ltd., Seattle, Wash., covering the following:

- (1) Firm will stop printing letters not actually written by students, & to recite only the true experiences of the writers.
- (2) To cease from representing by "helpwanted" advs. or otherwise that they offer employment or do anything other than sell correspondence courses.
- (3) By the use of the designation "vocational advisers" or otherwise that their salesmen are employed in any other activity than the selling of correspondence courses.
- (4) That purchasers of the courses are specially selected or limited in number and that the courses are sold only to persons of superior qualifications.
- (5) That the earnings of or opportunities for employment for students are greater than actually encountered in due course of business.

The thing that makes this stipulation important for writers is that it sets a pattern you can apply to the advs. that you see in some of the writers' magazines. Read the advs. carefully; note how many of the advertisers are using similar selling methods, & whether from the language used, you consider it a good risk that they are sincere and truly interested in their students. Or, are they merely "selling correspondence courses," to quote the FTC?

In a quarter century of watching the advs. we have noticed a fairly large number, that follow one or more of the lines cited above and disapproved of by the FTC. For example, we know of one "endorsement" used by one of the big mail-order courses, that is approximately ten or fifteen years old. How do we know? Because the woman who gave it, came to us some years later and related the facts. In another case, the names of authors now dead are still being used, and we have reason to believe that their use was originally given to a firm that has since been bought out by a new management. Now both of these practices

may be technically legal, but we don't consider withholding the essential facts to be either ethical or morally tenable. How much faith would you have in the probable integrity of these two firms, if you knew of the circumstances? Would you be quite so interested in laying down your money?

The editors of REWRITE are always pleased to give writers any information they have on file regarding any service advertising various types of professional help. We greatly prefer to give this counsel before a writer pays out his money. We do this gratis, as a public service to writers, editors, teachers and others. We are now exchanging in confidence with other professional organizations that are interested in seeing that inexperienced persons are not misled and duped out of funds that have been hard to come by, and which they can ill afford to lose.

### LIGHTNING DOES STRIKE TWICE

A day or two after the fatal plane crash, in which 13 important correspondents on the way home from the Dutch Indies were killed, I resolved to write this story. Today, picking up the Boston HERALD (July 13), I read Bill Cunningham's editorializing column, putting over exactly what I intended to say at much greater length and probably with more background knowledge. As a good newspaperman, I am pleased that a good story thus receives a wider circulation, and that my opinion on a writing subject of importance is arrived at independently by another writer carrying as much weight as Bill Cunningham.

The point that Bill and I wish to make is that those newspapermen were trying to cover the squabble between the Dutch Government and the Indonesian Republic. (Because of the Communist sweep in the Far East, many diplomats consider the East Indies a tinder-box, where another World War could originate.) Yet these newspapermen were the guests of, & all their expenses were being paid by the Dutch Government. How could they be entirely "objective"?

Neither Bill nor I question the integrity of the men concerned. All of them were top-flight correspondents; several of them were our personal friends, and I had worked with Nat Barrows on the Boston TRANSCRIPT. What we are asking is: "How free is the great American press, when it allows an interested party to subsidize it in that way? When it allows the professional baseball teams, and quite a few other commercial organizations, to pay the expenses of its reporters?" Bill stressed the irony that one of the few correspondents who survived the crash, because she was not on board, said the majority believed the Dutch Government had the best of the argument. But how could the reporters appear to be honest in expressing that opinion, when they had been paid off by the Dutch Government? There is a moral in this matter for all writers. Don't be obligated—ever!

## REWRITE

### SOME EDITORS DO THINK THIS WAY!

Here is an excellent point and a piece of acute observation made by one of our Minute Men.

"Yesterday I took the last two issues (SEP, July 2nd & 9th) down to read at our camp at the shore. In one a serial by Thomas Walsh, began with winter weather: overcoats, autos skidding on ice, etc. Another story began in a snow storm; the whole story was laid in a winter setting. A third story, by Cecily Teague Crowe, had three important scenes: summer storm, country fair and a Christmas party with mistletoe and everything. The chief illustration showed a Christmas tree.

"My point is that the editor must have had the deliberate plan to bring a little ice & snow into our hottest weather. And so for the POST at least, a winter story need not be a "must" for winter publication only."

Mary Billings

### A SPECIALIZED FILLER MARKET

TIMBER TOPICS, Allis-Chalmers Manufacturing Co., Milwaukee, Wis., (a give-away magazine) uses a "Tall Timber Tale" in each bi-monthly issue. Pays \$5 for same.

Mary Billings

### A CHANGE IS THE ONLY CERTAIN THING

THE NEW MEXICO QUARTERLY REVIEW, Joaquin Ortega, Univ. of New Mexico, Albuquerque, N. M., has been radically changed in format, according to the PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY, and several new features have been introduced. This is one of the quality regional magazines.

Rep. Eugene J. McCarthy (Dem.) of Minn. introduced a bill to reduce postage on books. It would set the rate at 3c a pound up to a total of 70 lbs. And 2c. for books mailed by public libraries and non-profit organizations (supposedly in the public interest). Write to him and your representatives, supporting action on H.R. 2477.

Mevis McIntosh, McKee & Batchelder, 624 Madison Ave., NYC, is a new literary agency. It represents the English agent, Joyce Weiner. Miss Otis was one of the founders of the agency of McIntosh & Otis. She will spend her time on books; Elizabeth McKee & Charles Batchelder will handle magazine work.

Marshall McClintock has been appointed to the job of talent scout for material developing from book publishers, for COLLIER'S. Of course you know that there has been a terrific turn-over recently in the editorial portion of COLLIER'S. The big wind took practically everything but the masthead. So, you will need to study this book, and watch the changes for some time to come. There will be a lot of new ideas for months to come.

### SO WHICH WAY WILL YOU TELL IT?

The other day we read a bizarre short story ms. that seemed to justify the use of an observing character to tell it. It was such an unbelievable segment of human experience it needed someone whom we could accept as familiar with the situation, to comment on it in passing. That would have been the way to build up overtones for the reader. Instead, the author stepped in with his ruler, pointing at the characters and explaining, "John was the kind of man who never understood women." (The observing character could naturally and colloquially have expressed such a thought in a breezy manner that would build up the illusion of reality instead of tearing it down, and would have advanced the story instead of stopping it while author made a dull informational statement of "explanation" about the characters.

That story set us thinking. The success of a story's effect on a reader depends so often on the wise choice of a method of telling the story. Will you tell it directly in the third person (dramatic) manner? Or will you use the "I" personal narration method? A main character says, "This happened to me—it is interesting, amazing, dramatic." Or, finally, will you compromise and have someone, visible or invisible, tell the story as he sees it? In this latter method there's a very definite distinction between the character "who was there" and the invisible over-the-shoulder author who tells the story, but never permits himself to get between the reader and the characters. In the first you are speaking through a character. He perhaps never actually appears in the story, but his personality is reflected in the telling. He can use colloquial expressions, unique, characteristic ways of thinking born of his experience in living with the people concerned with the situation. Imagine the lift any story might get from being told in the salty and thrifty phrases of a shrewd, witty down East Yankee. Especially if his keen mind is used to bring out the highlights.

Too many inexperienced writers know there is a certain minimum amount of information, which they have got to put over to the reader. But they avidly seize upon the most uninteresting way of projecting that information. Either they have the MC sit and think about the situation, which stops the story, or they themselves step into the story, and baldly state that Alma falls in love with a radio crooner, but not because she thinks a crooner is wonderful, but because she's had to take care of her dear old mother for the best part of her youth and now is ready and desperately willing to jump out of the frying pan into the fire.

The point is that readers wish to be told important facts, but they want the author to do it in an entertaining, natural way & not hold the story up while he's doing it. This explains much of today's "bright" writing.

## REWRITE

### DO YOU APPRECIATE YOUR OPPORTUNITY?

One of the commonest criticisms now being levelled at the American school system is a charge that our children are being filled up with facts, but the significance and larger meaning of these in relation to all life, is not pushed home. In many cases, the perspective is not taught at all. Obviously, it is a serious charge because it strikes deep to the very roots and basic reasons for education. Facts and ideas are tools with which a man may gain a better understanding of life and his own relation to the whole of it. If education does not give him this, it doesn't give him the enduring satisfactions and opportunities of life. And so it fails.

It is not our job in this article to discuss the success or failure of the American educational system. Undoubtedly there are a large number of individual teachers, who do their professional job in a devoted, satisfying and creatively stimulating manner. It is a question whether all of them aren't overloaded as to both the number of students, and also the subjects and organizational duties assigned to them. And whether many also are not temperamentally unsuited to their task. Real teaching is, like writing, one of the great creative arts. It takes everything a person has to give, and its results touch infinity because they are passed around and handed down from one generation to another. Teaching (and writing) is a great responsibility.

The real reason, however, that we bring up this subject is because of its relations to writing. If you will stop to think, you can see immediately that if teachers do miss an opportunity, they hand it on to writers. In every place you write, whether it be fiction or non-fiction, a two-line poem or an essay or serious text-book, you have the God-given chance to entertain, amuse, instruct and stimulate intellectually and emotionally an audience of uncounted readers. Moreover, you can usually talk to them as one person does to another. They may not like what you say, but for one wonderful moment they stop, look and listen. It is up to you to make your message so appealing that it proves irresistible.

Whether you succeed or fail completely, a reader is never quite the same after glancing at your words. Even if only one idea is caught up in the mesh of his mind, his outlook on life will be changed. You have helped him to grow; he is stronger or weaker because of you. Do you recall those slates on which it is possible to write and then when you lift the transparent surface, the writing disappears? Well, to some degree we are writing on sand in that same way. The waves of life's insweeping tide rush up and clean the slate of your reader's mind. But remember always that the process is never entirely perfect. The waves may seem to obliterate but actually they, too, only transform, alter and create further change. Your writing

is as evanescent as the wind, yet it leaves its mark just as surely and irrevocably. An idea can be the most important factor in the world. Look at "Communism". See what a disrupting force it is because weak and frightened folk let themselves be terrified by it and hysterically attempt to stamp on it, the way they would on a wriggling, disturbing but helpless little garter snake. (Communism, of the hating, vengeful type that is manufactured in the propaganda machines of Moscow & elsewhere is much more dangerous than a garter snake, but were we to ignore it, counter it with a constructive, dynamic philosophy, truly our own, it would soon die of inanition. It requires people to believe in it, if it's to continue to live.) Look at the teachings of Jesus. Today, in spite of all the doubts and misinterpretations and schisms, they are still the strongest, truest and most potentially creative philosophy ever conceived by men. To a greater or lesser degree, Jesus although he has been dead nearly 2,000 years, continues to affect more truly the lives and character of more people than any other man living or dead.

You will find it will help you greatly if you think of your writing in this light. If every time you sit down to write, be it fiction or non-fiction, you ask yourself, what is it in a simple sentence, that I want the reader to get from this piece. If you sum up in a simple sentence with no hanging clauses the general idea of (1) your purpose and (2) your theme, you will have a much better opportunity to keep on a straight line, without introducing a lot of confusing tangents. Take the NEW YORKER, for instance. It has a distinct field of its own and it educates a great many people at the same time that, by reducing humbug to terms of absurdity, it amuses. You are not the same person when you have finished reading a copy. It is true of course that a lot of brainless sophisticates think they are intelligent and superior because they can read the NEW YORKER and laugh in the right places. But absorbed in smallish doses and not as a habit-forming drug, a magazine such as the NEW YORKER can be good intellectual tonic, a mind stimulator.

Feature writing is a great education. The writer learns an immense amount. And even a casual reader picks up much useful information. I always study the feature section of a new and unfamiliar newspaper or magazine. If it is well edited, I read the articles & watch for the flow of facts. If it's breezily humorous, I skim it for the humor & amusing entertainment. There is great danger in the digest magazines, because while they're edited very tightly and the fact content naturally is apt to be high, it is also impossible to handle a big subject in a few pages and around 750 words. But the good featured article can, and often does, do what teachers in school should do: it gives you background & perspective on a subject of tangible importance. And there is no greater fun than learning what this world is all about.



## REWRITE

### BE FRIENDS WITH THE PRESS

Writers got a good lesson recently in bad press relations. Mrs. Frances Parkinson Keyes was the featured speaker at a session of the annual Alabama Writers' Conference. A group of reporters met the novelist at the Birmingham Airport. Mrs. Keyes met them with indignant outcries of anger. "I never grant any interviews. I said over and over again I desired no engagements," she stormed. She was angry at the reporters, uncharitable to her hosts and received a frosty write-up by the Birmingham NEWS, famous for many years for a remarkable daily short story column encouraging young Southern writers.

Writers should remember that this kind of publicity achieves headlines, but it doesn't make permanent or loyal readers. Publicity alone never made a writer. To be a writer—just the same as to be a person—requires a stock-in-trade of character and ideas. The great men and women of all ages have been a courageous group, people of action and positive ideals, often in the face of discouragement of the worst kind. But they've persisted, because of the thing within them. It had to be lived, had to be said in the face of every obstacle.

But every one is wise to try to give himself the best appearance before the world he can. You write your own character in all of your acts, in everything you say and write, everything you think and feel. It is all an integral part of what you look like and are to your family, neighbors, friends, and the strangers by whom your thoughts are read. A core of inner sincerity therefore, is a better defense than any cloak or disguise that you can put on. "Love God, and be what you are!" All the great men of history and literature have followed that precept. The only additional advice that anyone can possibly give is to find and love good things. Do not waste your little time on earth in trivialities, on second rate ideas. Learn early to hoard your time for the ideas that nourish you.

And so when the reporters come around you and ply you with questions, give them bountifully of your best. They are writers, who are earning a meager and hard living. More than that, they are the eyes of the world—waiting to appraise and judge you as a person as well as a writer. Millions will soon see you as they do. Some of them are ordinary men and women as yourself. But they are apt to be pretty good judges of human nature. They see enough of it in the raw! So do not blame them if at times they are cynical and derisive. The best of them know how pitifully thin is the veneer of civilized decency. Therefore, the one sure way to warm them is to give them a little friendly kindness, the human understanding that makes them go away from the interview murmuring to each other, "He's a good Joe. He knows what it's all about." That's their highest compliment, and

that means you not only look good in other's eyes, you are good. And it won't hurt at all that you get a "good press". Something that is beyond price, because no one can buy it.

### THE WCS SCHOLARSHIP FUND

We don't often publicize the WCS Scholarship Fund. But we are glad to explain at occasional intervals just what it is, and how it operates. I started it in October, 1942. Friends and the WRITERS' BOOK CLUB have added to it since. Some of the writers receiving helps from it, have repaid their share, and this money has gone out again to help a second or third writer worse off than those contributing.

The Fund has helped writers to get advice from Writers' Counsel Service they couldn't have otherwise afforded. It has brought the books they needed, subscriptions to REWRITE and other miscellaneous aids. Good friends such as Herschel Brickell, have given bountifully of the books they have edited, written or merely found no longer useful. We've occasionally sold these for the benefit and greater use of the Fund. More often we have sent them to shut-ins, hospitals, or impoverished writers for whom that particular inspiration we know will prove helpful. We try to make the help of the Fund appropriate and fitting. We only wish we had more time to devote to such errands of mercy. They do so much good in a harsh world and require so little imagination, if one really puts his mind to it.

### GOOD ADVICE FROM AN OLD EDITOR

We were checking on a certain publication regarding its editorial requirements only a few days ago. An obliging editor volunteered to get us the data. As I was talking with him about it, he said, "You know, Bill, they don't really have policies. They don't know what they want. They just have holes to fill. The fellow who comes along with a good idea they can use, he's the one who gets a nod."

There is a lot to that thought. A woman's isn't the same as the sports page, the feature supplement is different from either. A unique, appropriate and purposeful article, that fills the space with stimulating news, feature or filler material, will be welcomed equally warmly, however, by all three editors. So, think this matter over carefully and don't be afraid to tackle any editor if you have something that is likely to interest him. Don't be afraid to suggest it just because it has never been done before. But have plenty of reasons why it's a good idea for him.

And another thing old time editors always tell young writers is this. Don't be afraid to write the story that asks to be written. The most an editor can do is turn it down. A second editor may like it. But you've learned something in writing it. Your stuff, good or bad, is all you have to sell. If you try

## REWRITE

to write someone else's stuff, it will be a synthetic product. So, try to figure out the way to make your own better. If you're smart and resourceful, you can create a market or satisfy an existing one, by pulling your material into line. Either way, you will find you get a thrill of satisfaction in being a good craftsman.

### PHILIP HALE STUDIED TO BE A CRITIC!

Speaking of old editors, I saw Pitt Tryon, retired music critic of the C.S. MONITOR, at the Harvard University Commencement luncheon enjoying himself hugely. He was talking enthusiastically to members of the Harvard Band between numbers at the concert in the Yard. I asked him facetiously if he was learning, perhaps, to be a musician. "Oh, Bill, I always learn a lot talking to the men who play," he smiled, and went on reading scores, leaning lightly over one shoulder after another.

Can you be as teachable as that?

### THESE ARE TOUGH TIMES!

We have written frequently about the vicious practice of vanity publishing, wherein inexperienced writers are taken for a sleigh ride by mere printers, who charge an exorbitant fee for putting a ms. between hard covers without ever offering any tangible, practical method of distribution. Well, now, at Harvard's Commencement Day festivities I was given another angle on this disturbing subject.

A man who would be well known if we offered his name, told us that he has a literary biography ready for publication. According to his story, a number of university presses and several trade publishers have given him definite assurance they would be glad to be the publishers of this book, if he would be willing to share in the pre-publication expense. Some publishers deny their willingness to adopt such methods. But in one form or another you hear the same story. At a recent conference of university press editors, the subject of possible economies was discussed and it was disclosed that some presses don't permit the author to see his book in galley proofs. The press does the final editing, a risky business in the case of scholarly and scientific books.

The problem of how to get published, is becoming increasingly important to the younger generation of scholars, whose books count definitely in their professional progress. A book of this type often, if not usually, appeals to a limited audience. It is certainly not in the best interests of scholarship or the future of our civilization that only those books should get published, the writers of which have the financial means to get them published. Nor does one like the dramatic possibility of scholars log-rolling behind the scenes in a "me first" ruckus. The whole subject needs a lot of healthy airing

and the application of some practical remedies.

It also suggests a wide field of possible research on the part of reportorially minded writers. We need to have it brought home vividly to us just how the crass materialism of our much vaunted Western culture is gradually destroying or driving out of circulation many of the important necessities that our ancestors could not do without. In the house where Sarah Orne Jewett worked, there is a gracious stairway and other hand-carved woodwork that required the services of 3 country carpenters for 100 days. Today, not only could such decoration not be used, because it would be a prohibitive luxury, but also where could one find similar craftsmen able to do the work?

### YOUR SUPPORT MAKES REWRITE BETTER

We have never cut the REWRITE subscription rate through special offers. We've felt this was not fair to the hundreds of writers who continue to support at the prevailing rate, the only writers' professional magazine that accepts no advertising so it can best serve writers' interests. Many of you writers buy REWRITE for two and three years at a time & do the same thing for your friends. We are grateful and try to show our gratitude with a better magazine and more services to help you write and sell.

However, these are tough times. So, we do our utmost to try to help as many writers as possible to enjoy and profit from REWRITE. A lift from the WCS Scholarship Fund will always be available for the handicapped, shut-in writer. And here are specially designed, practical money-saving rates:

**Complete File**—a few issues are O. P. However, you can have almost 8 years of REWRITE as follows: subscribers, \$4, non-subscribers \$5. (West of the Mississippi, add \$1.)

**"Second" Subscriptions** (Same Address)—a lot of writers tell us they like to cut up their copies and file special articles or notes about markets. We'll send second subscription copies, or as many more as you wish for only \$1. (Example: 2 subs., \$3.00.) A number of writers' clubs have already taken advantage of this rate.

**Library Subscriptions**—for public libraries and writers' club libraries we have a special yearly subscription of \$1.50. Please do urge your library to take advantage of this rate. It will help us to give you much more.

**Single back copies**—for filing or distribution to your friends, 10c. or 7 for \$1.00.

**Tearsheets**—clip-sheets from back issues or less than complete copies, 10c.

**Subscription agents.** We give regular agency discounts to all bona fide agents.

## REWRITE

### THE FIRST ANNUAL PHILADELPHIA CONFERENCE

In June, you will perhaps recall, we used our lead article to argue the advantages of writers working together. We tried to point out a few of the many ways that writers and writers' clubs could get good projects done through cooperative effort. We have here on our desk now a long letter and full report, from Florence Kerigan, covering the Regional Writers' Conference held in Philadelphia in June. It was the first annual one of its kind, and may well serve as a model for similar conferences in other parts of the country. Indeed, there is already talk of one to be held in Washington, D. C., next year. (It is a sesquicentennial anniversary year, you know.) There's the League of Vt. Writers, too.

Here is Florence Kerigan's report in brief: "The Conference was an outgrowth of the conviction that there should be enough writers, editors, critics in the Middle Atlantic area to make such a conference worthwhile. A Committee representing the Professional Writers' Club of Phila., the Junto Writers' Club, Women Writers' Club, Penn Pen Club, the Writers' Club of Delaware County, Judson Writers' League, Christian Authors' Guild, the Lehigh Valley Writers' Guild and the Abington Writers' Club went to work. The total expenses mounted to less than \$150, yet a 2-days conference with an opening dinner the night before was held. Eighty writers attended this dinner and more than 100 registered for the conference. A choice of 26 workshops were advertised, but instead of the promised most popular four, the writers were actually given a selection of 14! And speakers included representatives of the SAT. EVE. POST, J.B. Lippincott Co., Westminster Press, ETUDE, John C. Winston Co. and the American Sunday Schools Union. And 126 mss. were turned in. All in all, it was a very successful first conference. REWRITE was actively represented by a bundle of sample copies."

Prize winners were as follows: in Fiction, Waldo Wright and Anna Jespersen; Drama, Bessie P. Collins; Juvenile fiction, Francoise Jones; Feature article, Mrs. Mabel Love; & Poetry, Mrs. Sarah Leeds Ash, Jeanette S. Michener, and Margaret Vauclain Roberts. Writers came from Washington, D. C., Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York.

### GET IT DONE TODAY!

One of the ways to go places in this business of writing is to do things now rather than put them off until tomorrow. It doesn't matter too much what you do as long as some work is accomplished every day. Many workaday folk are conscious that their energy is high one day, low another. For the most part they are content to hustle when they're feeling good, and just drift on the other days. But that is fatal for a writer. He has got to learn to hustle every day. He has to do a piece of writing whether he feels like it or not. That's the great thing about newspaper

writing: it disciplines you to write at any and all times, and under any conditions, no matter how deplorable.

It is surprising how constant writing and forcing yourself to do some activity related to your writing every day, keeps you going and seems to add steam to your boiler. A ms. put into an envelop and mailed, is some thing accomplished. If you have cleaned the desk you work on, or gone over some old plot ideas, you have been maintaining headway. A little progress, even if it is only preparation, gives your confidence in yourself an awful lift. And sometimes that means all of the difference between an acceptance and rejection. If you can't believe in a story, a reader never will. And that's where the true showman betrays the color of his courage. If he can cover up his chattering teeth and do a good act, even though he has no energy, & is afraid his material is drivel, he can be assured his performance will be brilliant—on that day when he is at the top of his game and can't do anything wrong.

But the writers who make the most of those good days are the ones who did not wait for success to break during the bad times. So, do something in your slump, if its only seeing how the pencil sharpener works!

### STUDY THE BOOK!

There are a number of reasons why writers should "study the book" relentlessly. It is important, of course, to know your target. A good salesman studies his prospects in preparation to selling them. He needs to have a lot of good reasons why the customer simply must have his product. In the same way, professional writers try to build into the ms. each hopes to sell, all the possible reasons why an editor must inevitably find it right down his alley. If you can make a ms. timely, important and seem to fit a hole, which editors are trying desperately to fill, you will have no difficulty winning respectful, serious attention for your mss.

Another reason for studying the book. Recently, I read somewhere that even a writer as popular and successful as Somerset Maugham reads his contemporaries to "get ideas." Quite apart from absorbing the style and usage of a specific book, you put yourself in the main current of your generation by discriminating reading and sizing up the magazines that are your potential markets. Too many writers just write and hope to find an editor willing to publish the ms "as is". A professional writer, however, knows this is an unrealistic approach. Between two writers the one with a lot of ideas and a knowledge of many markets always has the best chance.

"Death is not the worst of life. Defeat is not the worst of failures. Not to have tried is the true failure."

George Edward Woodberry

## REWRITE

### HOW'S YOUR BATTING AVERAGE?

Here is a chance for you to compete for a number of small prizes on a friendly basis. The WCS Family includes all of you who read REWRITE or patronize any of our services. By helping us to write this column, and to report your experiences (both good and bad) it becomes easier for us to bring you a vivid, specific picture of the markets, and what editors have been buying within the past thirty days or less. Some of our reports get to you in less than ten days!

Bernie Roth

Feature: SPORTS AFIELD.

Marjorie Scheuer

Poem: KATEIDOGRAPH.

Virginia Sievert

Poems: OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART, SUNSHINE & HEALTH, California Milk NEWS.

Doris Marston

Articles: AMERICAN HOME, Lewiston JOURNAL.

Edward W. Ludwig

Article: OUR DUMB ANIMALS.

Carrie Esther Hammil

Article: TELESCOPE-MESSENGER.

Poem: STORIES FOR CHILDREN.

Marjorie McClellan Flint

Story: Boston Daily POST.

Lorraine Pentell

Ina Blanchard Bates

Articles: COLLECTOR-HOBBYIST.

(Note: two other former REWRITE subscribers and Bill Harris were represented in the same issue. Bill had a short short in OUR YOUNG WORLD.)

COLLECTOR-HOBBYIST, J.N.Hile, Box 864, Denver, 1, Col., wants items of club news badly.

Writers' Board for World Government, 7 E. 12th St., NYC, has been organized by seventeen well known writers, editors, etc. Rex Stout is chairman. Norman Cousins, Robert E. Sherwood, John Farrar, John Hersey, Christopher LaFarge, Oscar Hammerstein II show the character of the group.

The PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY lists 13 members of the book trade, who will be the authors, or editors of books coming out during the fall months.

Add: It Can Be Done Dep't. Frank Gruber a short while ago acted as his own agent when his book, "The Fighting Plainsman" was sold to the movies. He wrote the screen play, too. He is a popular big name pulp writer.

Tell your friends about REWRITE; buy your books, all of them, through the WRITERS' BOOK CLUB. You strengthen your friendly magazine.

### AN EXPERIENCE TO LEARN FROM

An anecdote was recently released by book publishers Houghton Mifflin Company. Writers can learn a number of things from it. In 1918 Ben Ames Williams met Bert McGorriston, a Seabrook, Maine, farmer. Out of the conversation emerged Williams' idea for a series of stories about "Fraternity Village". Between 1919 and 1940 Williams wrote 125 of these stories, of which 100 were published. The SAT. EVE. POST took 55, one-third of all he has written for them. The COUNTRY GENTLEMAN and COLLIERS accounted for another 20, and eight or ten magazines took one or more apiece. Now 16 are being reprinted in a book which undoubtedly is the start of a series.

Writers can learn at least the following:

- (1) The importance of an often chance talk.
- (2) Simple, small town folk are the best and most potentially salable source of material for writers.
- (3) The changes in this type of life in the passing of the years are more gradual. A writer can devote a lifetime (in Williams' case, 21 years) to exploiting them, yet count that his material will not be dated nearly so quickly as with sophisticated backgrounds.
- (4) This type of story will appeal to wider audiences and serve more editors.
- (5) The secondary rights will prove more lucrative. (Some of Williams' stories have been used for movies, others have served teachers of English and creative writing in their anthologies.)
- (6) A familiar background and remembered or similar characters act as a cumulative, developing "trade mark" for writers. A reader tends to look for the stories, & a loyal public is built up that editors cultivate. Thus a demand is created for the author's product.
- (7) This kind of material because of a warm, folksy quality, tends to generate readers' letters. And fan-mail often, usually supplies a writer with new ideas and additional copy.

Undoubtedly thoughtful writers will think of other practical hints to be derived from this anecdote concerning Williams' long experience in writing about "Fraternity Village". I can think of several myself.

### ALWAYS PUT YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD

In the introduction to her annual collection, "The Best American Short Stories" (the 1949 edition), Martha Foley tells about the editorial assistant who was indignant, when writers wished to revise their stories prior to inclusion in the anthology. But when one of her own stories was selected, the assistant asked that she be allowed to revise it. (A writer wouldn't be smart not to!)

This should be routine practice with every writer. It is time well invested because of the new readers who will see your stuff.



## REWRITE

### SOME FILLER MARKET TIPS

PICKIN'S, PROGRESSIVE FARMER, 821 No. 19th St., Birmingham 2, Ala., pays \$5, \$3, & \$2, for the first three anecdotes combining humor and good sense. Also \$1 for all the others printed each month. (The June issue used 8 items, giving the name of the author & the state from which he or she comes.

NOTE: this magazine is printed in 4 separate editions slanted to various neighboring Southern states. A hint for feature writers since the book appears to use some material from free lance experts. Each edition has a separate office. The magazine has been published for over 60 years.

BETTER HOMES & GARDENS, Frank McDonough, 1714 Locust St., Des Moines 3, Iowa, is offering \$6,100 in prizes in its 5th (annual) "More Beautiful America" contest. It's open to civic, religious, fraternal or industrial groups, which submit articles covering a beautification project accomplished between April 1 and November 1, 1949. It must be "a civic project, permanent in character, benefit the whole community." A good chance for a free lance feature writer to help both his community and himself, and gain a dignified piece of publicity for a local organization.

SAT. EVE. POST, Independence Sq., Phila., 5, Penna., frequently develops new filler ideas, which it continues for a considerable period of time. The "POST War Anecdotes", & the "Perfect Squelch" are recent examples. A resourceful writer might be able to sell the POST a new idea. (They have to be developed from time to time.) The pay-off is \$100, on acceptance or shortly thereafter.

READERS' DIGEST, Pleasantville, N. Y., also follows this practice. The editors usually run several filler anecdotes under a new and catchy heading. Frequently these follow a seasonal trend. Could be that an ingenious writer could sell the editor an idea with a filler or two to back it up and the suggestion that the editor rake his files for similar material. (This is merely speculation, but it seems to carry a fair amount of commonsense since it would take you out of the ranks of the 40,000 other writers, who send in contributions in the hope of hitting the juiciest filler market in existence.)

### EXPERIMENT TODAY, SELL TOMORROW

Alan Swallow had an article in the PRAIRIE SCHOOER, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Neb., commenting on the fact which is obvious to anyone who reads them, that a number of the quality reviews of this type, originally published as regional magazines, are now paying more attention to the new or younger writers without emphasis on regional affiliations. This is all to the good. It gives promising writers a better chance. No pay in these books, but editors, agents are careful readers of them. Good writing is re-

quired, but it can be off the beaten track. Yet editors and agents know that writers in these magazines will be turning up in popular slicks a few years hence. So, if you do a good job here, you will be solicited by a number of other editors, and the book editors will be after you to try a novel. It is being done every day in the year.

### WHICH KIND OF WRITER ARE YOU?

Rev. Allen W. Clark, editor of the always readable "Home Prayers," had a good thought for writers in a recent issue. The springboard for it came from the chance remark of an old Portuguese fisherman, a friend of his youth. This Frank Salvador said one day, "Allen, there are some days when you just can't make any money." No matter what you do, everything goes wrong. This reminded Clark of the thought there are 3 kinds of Christians. (Change it to "writers.")

(1) The Rowboat Type. He depends entirely on himself and his own resources. So he cannot go very far or fast, and he is not seaworthy in troubled waters.

(2) The Sailboat Type. He depends on the wind. In other words, "luck", the "breaks", & the back-patting of other "fair weather" seilior friends. But if the winds die down, then he's becalmed. So, he loses his headway.

(3) The Steamship Type. Their power is "inside". They can use their own resources and a fair wind, but they are not dependent entirely on these. Theirs is the limitless, infinite power of God in their own hearts.

As REWRITE'S good friend, Allen, finished off this idea: "It is quiet, stubborn faith in God which makes life into a victorious adventure. It is the belief that, if you keep faithfully on, doing your job, tackling the tough tasks with courage and doing the daily hum-drum, God will see you through. It works—in the long run, it always works, because He gives you tasks, and He gives you strength to go through with them."

### A GENEROUS GIFT TO THE LIBRARY

Paul Twitchell sent us a big box of books for the WCS Circulating Library this month. We're starting them out to help writers immediately. The new system we introduced recently, by which we can tell at a glance in the book where every copy in circulation is at any specific moment, is speeding up circulation rapidly. It requires more records, but the efficiency of the library has jumped and we are filling more requests a great deal more quickly.

And with more money available for getting additional copies of popular titles, we hope to satisfy all requests much more promptly. The WCS Circulating Library is a whole-time job, which we have somehow managed to maintain in spare moments at best!

## REWRITE

### NEWS ALONG THE BATTLE-FRONT

A sign of the times is the number of book publishers, some old, some new, that are being taken over or absorbed in one way or another. Here are a few choice items:

(1) The Outlet Book Co. has become the full "legal successor" of Robert M. McBride Co., taking over all titles, rights and authors' contracts.

(2) Crown Publishers and Lothrop, Lee & Shepard have taken over (purchased) a list of the titles belonging to Allen, Towne & Heath, a firm that has suspended, but is holding its imprint.

(3) Crown had previously taken over Howell, Soskin, and also, it is said, the successor firm to Robert M. McBride's original firm—before Outlet stepped into the picture.

It is all very confusing when "remainder" firms start taking over publishers, and the latter control book clubs or have an interest in reprint houses. Writers should insist on controlling their rights in case of changes.

A new kind of a songwriter's contest with no fees to pay, was launched by Capitol Records starting July 1st. An album, "Songs Without Words", is the basis for the awards. The tunes have been written by top melody writers from Tin Pan Alley. You writers have to compose the lyrics. Prizes: a SPA contract, and \$1,000 advance against royalties to the 6 prize-winning lyrics. Entry blanks at all record dealers. Syde Berman of the SONGWRITER'S REVIEW says it's on the level. CAPITOL is one of the top recording companies.

"Here's an Idea," Federation for Railway Progress, 1430 K St., N.W., Washington, D.C., offers \$10 for the best and \$3 for all others used. (The FRP is a membership society, with annual dues. There is no direct statement limiting entries to members.)

Youth of All Nations, Inc., 16 St. Luke's Place, NYC 14, sent us an appealing news release recently. It conducts a "Palsis Postal" feature, which is a method for maintaining a stimulating letter-forum. Purpose is to get young people exchanging ideas and a greater understanding of common problems. For further details, address as above.

Why don't magazines sell? Here's one reason. The Franklin Square Agency, one of the best subscription bureaus in the business & one of the oldest, sent a form letter to all magazines in which it requested blanket permission to amend the standard 50-50 division of the wholesale discount with its sub-agent. "We find we cannot process a subscription," the letter reads, "through our organization for less than 30%." Add a discount for sub-agents and you will see how much the publication gets! It's nice to see wages steadily rising, but who's going to pay them?

### A PREDICTION OF TOMORROW'S TREND

The field of Science Fiction may be the one to enjoy the next vogue. Paul S. Nathan predicted this in his movie column in PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY for June 18th. He said that one author in this field had within a matter of weeks been asked to submit (1) a video series; (2) to submit an outline for a novel & (3) supply mss. of published stories to the story editors of several movie companies.

Nathan further stated that Doubleday & Co., Crown, Simon & Schuster, Dutton, and Little Brown and other book publishers are exploring the possibilities. Several others, Pocket Books and Dell among them, have issued Science Fiction anthologies. And Hollywood has an eager eye.

He explains the interest as similar to the Jules Verne vogue. "Readers hungry for certainty in the world's current turmoil, find reassurance of a sort in the speculations of authors who have frequently called the turn on such matters as supersonic flight, atomic energy, mechanical brains, or what have you."

Read that last sentence again. There is a profound thought there. Also recall that in REWRITE we have been almost the sole "voice in the wilderness" pointing out that people everywhere passionately desire that sense of "reassurance". They want it more than money or free merchandise given away on the radio. The lack of it is the root of all our crime, juvenile delinquency and growing population of mentally disturbed men, women and children. Our culture, our very civilization may well go under for lack of this form of mental security.

As we have repeatedly pointed out, politicians and writers would be very smart to appreciate this crying need, and act upon it!

### JUST CONFLICT IS NOT ENOUGH

There are two aspects to the problem concerning Conflict in a short story. (1) You need to have conflict; dramatic conflict is not the same thing as mere disagreement, an intellectual argument as to which one comes first, the hen or the egg. (2) You need the right kind of a conflict. I read a story recently for instance, in which the basic conflict is consistently unconvincing most all the way through the story. It might be a believable story if the hero were an immature young boy, but for a married man, no. To a certain extent, the conflict has to be true and acceptable within the experience of the readers. A magazine slanted to very young or business women, would find it difficult, you see, to make the peculiar problems of older married women seem important or appealing.

That is why the big circulation magazines keep to a prevailing pattern. It requires a real imagination to appreciate the conflict in an off-trail story. So make it "likely".

## REWRITE

### BOOKS FOR WRITERS

**SHORT STORY WRITING.** F. Orlaine Tremaine. Rodale Press. \$3.50. This book is written by a long time writer, who is now editing the new SOUTHERNER Magazine. There is a lot of good wise dope here for the inexperienced writer. But you have to dig and be on the alert for it, because it's "experience" stuff, not the usual textbook "how to do" material. As the final chapter he offers a program for selling: a story a week for 11 weeks. You could never sell the slicks that way unless you'd written for many years. Many of those eleven stories would need concentration, polish and building up that you couldn't give them in a week when you were also turning out story number 15 or 16! But, taken with a grain of salt and some experienced perspective, it's a good method for beginning writers. And it is a book writers ought to read. A WRITERS' BOOK CLUB Selection.

**BELIEVED BONDAGE.** Elizabeth Yates. People's Book Club. Not a new book, but a "new" edition by a popular writer. She's returning for a second year to the UNH Conference Staff. It is an interesting book because it is "unorthodox" fiction in a number of respects. You can learn things from reading it. And this novel's author is one of the most "genuine" and friendliest, kindest writers we know.

**SHORT STORY CRAFT.** Iillian Gilkes and Werran Bower. The Macmillan Co. \$3.50. The two authors (both from New York University) have tried to build a "teaching" anthology. Stories are selected from the Quality and Slick magazines to show the full range of lengths and types. They are not stories often found in anthologies. The two articles about story technique are sound and practical in the discussion they give to specific topics and questions often raised by inexperienced authors or their stories. A WRITERS' BOOK CLUB Selection.

### HERE IS A GOOD FEATURE IDEA

It is not too early to begin thinking how you can commercialize the idea of stamps. A great international exhibition in England is to mark the 110th anniversary of the world's first adhesive stamp. The centenary was not celebrated because of World War II. Philatelists are not going to let the opportunity for publicity go by the board. So there will certainly be a lot of free "hand-outs". But the alert feature writer and filler experts will know how to muscle in. Go to it.

### AND HERE'S ANOTHER

An author who shall be nameless, recently sold the same general plot to the same juvenile magazine for the third time! All about a cat that (1) got stranded on the wrong boat; (2) got locked in a freight car; (3) shut up in an oven in a stove that was certified away. If that does not give you an idea how it is possible to pull a "switcheroo"!

### THE BULLETIN BOARD

**FRIENDS.** Paul R. Koontz, Otterbein Press, Dayton 2, Ohio, is an "open market" according to our correspondent, Carrie Esther Hemmil, but it apparently buys most of its fiction from the Story Paper Syndicate because she has seen these stories published in other juvenile papers. The pay is low, but "on acceptance: \$1 per poem, except for the long ones; and 4c. a word for prose. It is an Evangelical United Brethren paper."

**BUILDERS.** Rev. Raymond M. Veh, E.U.B. Publishing House, Harrisburg, Penna., is a companion paper for "young people and Christian Education workers" of this Church. It uses a small amount of fiction and a little more verse, the latter largely by members of the various congregations. In a column entitled "Fun" in a recent issue, the paper carried single cartoon and 6 jokes.

Joan Ranson, former editor of EVERYWOMANS recently did a "complete analysis of a leading magazine at the owner's request, flying into and out of Chicago for a 5-hour conference."

REWRITE recently received a second review copy of "Writing For Children" by Brick Berry & Herbert Best, \$2.50. It is breezy, just a bit sardonically cynical, but it teaches. And others besides those writing for children can benefit from it.

Two books we are glad to recommend highly are "The Outermost House" & "Northern Farm" by our good friend, Henry Beston. They are classics of rich, human writing. Deep & true.

Not long ago, the ISLAND LANTERN, prisoners' magazine at the U.S. Penitentiary, Steilacoom, Washington, wrote REWRITE & WRITERS' COUNSEL SERVICE up in a very kindly manner. Result: we have been placed on the Exchange list now of the NEW ERA, similar magazine at the U.S. Penitentiary, Leavenworth, Kansas, a most professional looking job. It is easily the largest prison magazine we have seen, a thoughtful, well edited periodical.

**ADD**—How your name gets on sucker lists.. We were recently offered (at a price) lists totalling 1,000,000 names by a specialized, educational list collection agency. We don't buy, trade or sell names.

And speaking of lists, we received a wonderful "easy, dignified" money-making plan. Writers are urged to form a syndicate (their own) and sell 25 fillers a month to 100 newspapers at \$3. (But why stop there, when it is stated that there are 5,000 prospects!) The letter is full of inconsistencies, such as: a fact that you need not invest a penny but you do need a typewriter (and writers' supplies!); and after stating that \$300 monthly is easy pickings, the circular promises, with remarkably quiet conservatism, that you can make "up to \$80 a month, on the side."

## REWRITE

### NEWS OF THE WRITERS' BOOK CLUB

Two ways that the WRITERS' BOOK CLUB succeeds in helping writers, can be reported in this issue. Just before going to press, your editor advised the San Francisco, Cal., Writers' Workshop on a large book order. These writers put a nickel into a bank at all the meetings. In no time they have the price of a library available to all. At the rate the purchases are piling up, they will soon have many more fine books on writing in book dividends than most writers and some public libraries own.

The second project by which WRITERS' BOOK CLUB gives double-barrel help to writers is through the exhibit and sale of books which we expect to put for the members of the UNH Summer Conference, as we have done for several years. It enables many writers to take a real look at books that may not be available in their home communities. (Every year we advise 100 or more writers as to the best books for them, and of course the authors of the books we sell, benefit. And both the C. S. Towle Scholarship Fund and the WCS Scholarship Fund have benefited, too.

### THE MONTH'S SELECTIONS

WRITERS ON WRITING. Ed. by Herschel Brickell. Chapters by Carroll S. Towle, William E. Harris, Esther Forbes and others. \$3.00. Handbook by members of the staff at the University of N. H. The result of 11 years practical work with writers. It covers most of the fields of popular writing.

111 DON'TS FOR WRITERS. Maren Elwood. \$2.95. Here is a very helpful book that any writer can use as a checklist to prevent rejections. A writer can learn a great deal from the short paragraphs about many common mistakes.

A MANUAL OF STYLE. Univ. of Chicago Press. \$4. A standard book for writers, editors, printers and everyone using words as a medium of expression. It will help you to make all of your mss. conform to editorial requirements. A time-saver with its rules and tables.

### CONTINUED RECOMMENDATIONS

THE ART OF READABLE WRITING. Rudolf Flesch. \$3.00. New book by popular writer. (Aug. 24.)

ARTICLE WRITING & MARKETING. Geo. L. Bird. \$5.50. A thorough, detailed analysis of the feature article. Most up-to-date & helpful.

WRITING—From Idea to Printed Page. \$5.95.. A very valuable casebook of actual feature stories and picture-articles used by the SEP and worked on by writers under the editorial supervision of SEP editors. A pictorial explanation of how it is done.

WEBSTER'S NEW COLLEGIATE DICTIONARY. \$6. No better dictionary for the price exists.

THE WRITER'S HANDBOOK. \$4.50. Without question the best available market list in book form. It's been newly revised and there are 69 instructive articles on all phases of the writing and selling business. We use it.

PLOT DIGEST. Kobold Knight. \$6.00. An English writer's detailed and helpful analysis of plot construction. We have found it most helpful. The author has sold to American magazines. It is highly practical.

### Buy all books from the WRITERS' BOOK CLUB BOOKS OF PERMANENT WORTH

CRAFT OF THE SHORT STORY. Richard Summers.. \$5.50. One of the best, and most practical books on the technique of writing and being a writer. Summers talks a writer's language. A best-seller in our book shop. Deservedly.

WRITE THE SHORT STORY. Maren Elwood. \$3.00  
CHARACTERS MAKE YOUR STORY. each.  
Two excellent books on fiction writing. They will last for many years.

STORY WRITING. Edith Mirrielees. \$3. One of the great books and a personal favorite here at WCS House. We would not be without it.

ASPECTS OF THE NOVEL. E.M. Forster. \$3. This is standard for all first novelists. Especially those attempting Quality novels.

FIRST PRINCIPLES OF VERSE. Robert Hillyer. \$2. A basic book for verse writers by a poet of distinction. Every poet should own it.

WRITING & SELLING SPECIAL FEATURE ARTICLES. Patterson & Hyde. \$4.65. A Univ. of Wisconsin School of Journalism book. Practical and successful in starting many writers.

MAGAZINE ARTICLE WRITING. Brennecke & Clerk. \$5.90. This one is a Columbia University title. It emphasizes magazine feature writing. Its "know how" quality is high.

Buy all books from the WRITERS' BOOK CLUB. Earn yourself a Book Dividend.

### DO YOU NEED MS. ENVELOPS?

The best quality at the lowest prices. We try to give you the most for your money. We adjust prices frequently to the cost of replacements.

SMALLEST Sizes (No. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$  & 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ ) (two fold)

25 of each \$ .90 50 of each \$1.65.

SMALL Sizes (6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x9 $\frac{1}{2}$  & 7x10) (one fold)

25 of each \$1.00 50 of each \$1.85.

LARGE Sizes (9x12 & 10x13) (flat)

15 of each \$1.00 30 of each \$1.90.

All prices plus postage. 30c. is average.